

Testimony before the House Michigan Competitiveness Committee September 24, 2014

Thank you for taking my testimony in support of HB4148 that would permit Michigan community colleges to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

As the Chief Nursing Officer at Munson Medical Center I want to share with you why I think this legislation is important to Munson, to our patients, to nurses in northern Michigan, and to the profession of Nursing. First, let me share a quick overview of Munson Medical Center:

- As the tertiary referral hospital of northern Michigan, Munson has over 50 medical specialties and subspecialties, is the largest employer in northern Michigan with 4,000 employees, and accepts patient transfers from across northern Michigan as well as the eastern Upper Peninsula.
- Munson Medical Center is a Magnet designated hospital, a top-100 hospital 14 times, and is the region's only trauma center, the region's only Neonatal Intensive Care, and the only institution consistently having an inpatient psychiatric unit. We also have 2,000 births per year, and over 80,000 visits to our emergency department and urgent care.

Before I give you the reasons behind my support for this legislation I would like to make a few points about our relationship with NMC:

- Munson and NMC have been partners for many years. We have worked with the college to expand their nursing program so we are better positioned to have the necessary number of RNs to meet the needs in our region.
- We also partner with NMC for clinical faculty, and Munson staff serves on the NMC Advisory Committee to review the nursing program's progress and program developments.
- Munson collaborates and partners with NMC for continuing education,

So, why is this legislation important to Munson Medical Center?

- Providing care in the acute care setting is becoming more complex. Patients at Munson are sicker, older, have more co-morbidities, and require higher levels of technology. Nurses need a BSN degree to meet the growing needs and demands of patients.
- Since 2009, Munson is requiring every nurse to achieve a BSN degree within ten years of their start date. Over the next ten years we are projecting that we will have over 700 nurses who will be seeking a BSN degree.

- Munson Medical Center is a Magnet recognized hospital. To achieve this recognition a hospital must meet a high level of excellence in patient care. A new Magnet requirement is to develop a plan to have 80% of the nurses to be prepared at the BSN level or higher and to show progress towards that goal.
- The University of Michigan and Grand Valley State University have discontinued their BSN completion programs at the NMC University Center. There has not been the necessary level of commitment from these programs for the nurses in our area. Our local college would not stop a baccalaureate program for nurses.

Why is this legislation important to patients?

- There is a growing and compelling body of research correlating higher levels of BSN prepared nurses with lower morbidity and mortality rates for patients. Higher educational levels for nurses are linked to better patient outcomes.

Why is this legislation important to nurses in northern Michigan?

- Community colleges offer a wider geographic reach, moderate costs, and a large infrastructure. They would enable nurses with associate degrees to continue working while pursuing a BSN degree.
- BSN completion programs offered by community colleges in other states tend to target and attract time- and place-bound students who might not otherwise pursue a degree at a 4-year college or university due to varying personal constraints.
- The establishment of BSN programs at community colleges is a strategy for local nurses who are unable to relocate because of family or work commitments. This would certainly apply to the rural nature of northern Michigan.
- There are several states that allow nursing programs in community colleges to offer BSN degrees. Enabling selected community colleges in Michigan to offer a BSN degree will enable many more nurses to achieve a BSN degree "close to home."

Why is this legislation important to the profession of Nursing?

- The 2010 IOM report on the Future of Nursing recommends 80% of the RNs in this country have a BSN degree by 2020. This recommendation is based on the research studies that I mentioned earlier.
- There are a limited number of spaces available for qualified candidates in BSN programs in the State of Michigan. These programs turn away

hundreds of qualified applicants each year. Increasing the number of programs offering a BSN degree, particularly close to home, will increase the number of BSN prepared nurses in the State of Michigan.

- Allowing the nursing programs in community colleges to offer a BSN degree is consistent with the strong movement within nursing education to encourage academic progression, from an associate degree to a baccalaureate and then on to graduate education. This legislation is a way of facilitating that.

We have a high level of confidence, based on our long history of partnership with Northwestern Michigan College that they can and will be an excellent and high quality partner. This will enable Munson and NMC to continue making a difference to the communities that we serve.

The future healthcare needs are acute, and the nursing profession needs to do its part to enhance its skills and capabilities to ensure that all patients receive exceptional care. By enabling nurses to receive a BSN degree on community college campuses, Michigan would be a leader in transformational change within nursing education, and patients would ultimately benefit.

Every nurse should have an opportunity to pursue a BSN degree at a place that is convenient, accessible and affordable. I urge you to adopt HB4148.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

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